



MECU Puts \$1,000,000 Back In Members' Pockets

Thanks to MECU's outstanding financial results in 2010, credit union members have just received a one-time "special patronage dividend" in their regular savings accounts. A total amount of more than \$1 million was paid to eligible members on December 31, 2010, in addition to the regular dividends paid on savings and other accounts.

The "special patronage dividend" comes from the money that remained after MECU paid operating expenses and regular dividends for the year and set aside an appropriate amount for reserves. In keeping with our promise to put members first, returning a portion of that money to members is simply the right thing to do — and it also serves to reward those who have supported the credit union over the past year.

All members with active accounts in good standing received a minimum of \$5 deposited to their savings.

Visit www.mecunet.org to learn what qualifies as an "active account" that is "in good standing."

On average, members received approximately \$30 in special patronage dividends. Our most active members — those who made greatest use of credit union services — received well over \$100. The exact amount each member received was based on a formula that factored in the percentage of the total amount of dividends you earned on savings, and the total amount of interest you paid on credit union loans during 2010. (Please see the related story on this page.)

Under the formula, members who supported the credit union by using additional services or products, particularly products that help reduce MECU's operating expenses, received a larger special patronage dividend. For example, members who have opted to receive eStatements

instead of traditional printed statements received an additional \$5, and those who use a debit card in place of paper checks got another \$5. By using electronic services, these members help the credit union spend less on printing, postage and document processing, so it's only right that they realize some of the savings, too.

Members who used certain other services, such as mortgage loans and credit cards, received additional payments. These services help generate needed revenue for the entire credit union, and the special patronage dividend simply returns a small portion of that money to the members who use them.

Rewarding the people who have contributed to our success is one more way that MECU continues to do the right thing and put members first. If you have questions about the special patronage dividend, please visit the MECU branch nearest to you or go to our website.

How was the "special patronage dividend" calculated?

The formula used to calculate your special patronage dividend was based on your usage of credit union products and services, especially those that help us increase revenue and decrease costs. Under the formula, you earned dividends this way:

- \$5 for an active debit card
- \$5 for e-statements
- \$5 for active bill payment
- \$10 for an active credit card
- \$40 for each first mortgage
- A percentage of the total dividends paid to you in 2010
- A percentage of the total interest you paid in 2010 for all loans, excluding Visa[®] first mortgages and student loans

All eligible members received a minimum special patronage dividend of \$5.

In This Issue

What's Your Money Personality?

Have you ever wondered why you use money in a particular way? Many forces impact the development of your money personality. You make purchases to fulfill desires and to make yourself feel a certain way. Some spending influences include advertising, media, society, friends, family and easy credit. In addition, shopping is an "experience" to enjoy and there are so many goods that are so affordable.

One way to evaluate your approach to money is to identify your attitudes about money. Where do you fit?

- **Hoarder**
The hoarder likes to save, budget, and prioritize
- **Spender**
The spender likes to spend
- **Planner**
The planner is the nitty-gritty, take-it-one-step-at-a-time type
- **Dreamer**
The dreamer hatches passionate schemes, but has no idea how to make them come true
- **Merger**
The merger wants to pull all of a couple's money together

- **Separatist**
The separatist wants at least some of his/her own money
- **Risk-taker**
The risk-taker loves adventurous investing
- **Risk-avoider**
The risk-avoider goes for the sure thing

Need financial help? As a member of MECU, you can take advantage of the GreenPath program, a free financial education and counseling program. GreenPath counselors are available Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EST), Friday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. To use this service, simply call 877-337-3399 or visit www.greenpath.com.

Source: GreenPath, Inc.

Investment And Planning

Working With A Financial Advisor

Content developed by CUNA Brokerage Services, provided by MECU Investment Advisors

Would you trust your medical diagnosis to a casual acquaintance? Do you cut your own hair? For many things it makes sense to pay a professional who has the expertise to deliver the best results. A professional financial advisor can make all the difference when you are looking to outline a sound, and achievable, financial plan. Follow these six steps to establish a good relationship with a professional financial advisor.

1. Choosing your investment advisor

One of the best ways to find a financial advisor is through a referral. Begin with a trusted source — inquire at your credit

union/personal banking center about financial advisors who are located at, or near, your local branch.

2. Set up a consultation

Ask a great variety of questions to evaluate if your financial objectives are well matched to the financial advisor's areas of expertise.

3. Discuss your goals and obligations

Your investment advisor will need information about you and your financial situation, philosophy and risk tolerance. Be candid about your income, debts, future obligations, and current assets.

4. Ask plenty of questions

If you don't understand something, make sure to ask. And keep asking until the answer is clear to you.

5. Meet or speak regularly

To keep your financial plan moving in the right direction, your advisor needs to know when important changes take place in your life. Keep your financial advisor in the loop.

6. Listen

Professional advisors can draw from years of experience and help you maintain a long-term perspective on your investment plan. Take the time to listen to what your financial advisor has to say.

Working with a financial professional can be one of the smartest things you can do to ensure you reach your personal and financial goals. Following these fundamental guidelines can go a long way in helping you get the most out of the working relationship with your financial advisor.

If you have any questions, or would like to provide feedback regarding the information presented in this article, please contact MECU Investment Advisors at 847-538-5124 or toll-free at 877-270-6392 x85124.

A Message from:





Do Your Homework Before Heading To College

We all know how expensive college is. Are there ways to reduce the cost of a college education?

There are many choices that impact college costs and when you do your research and communicate as a family, you will make wise and informed decisions. Explore the options that are available to you that can lead to significant savings in college costs.

Here are some ideas:

1. Attend a community college for two years.
2. Choose an in-state school instead of an out-of-state school.
3. Live at home during college. A large amount of money can be saved on room and board when you live at home during the college years.
4. Get involved in the AmeriCorps program. A student can earn education awards in exchange for national service. There are also some loan forgiveness programs in fields such as teaching, medical service and some police and firefighting fields.
5. Explore the many military options that are available.
6. Become a resident assistant to pay the cost of room and board

for each academic year that you're hired into that position. If you want to live on campus, you can become involved with leadership activities on campus, be a model citizen in the resident hall and obtain financial reward at the same time.

7. Evaluate the cost of living on campus versus living off campus.
8. Decide whether you will go to school full time or part time.

Explore all options with your family and work together to create an enjoyable experience.

Source: GreenPath, Inc.



A Message From The President

MECU Treats You Like No Other Institution



While 2010 may have been a tough year for many banks and other financial institutions, MECU has done well over the last 12 months, and we have members like you to thank for it.

Because you've supported the credit union by using our products and services, we're able to return more than \$1 million to the membership as a "special patronage dividend."

I think it's safe to say that you won't find any banks returning excess profits to their customers anytime soon — but then, things like the "special patronage dividend" are part of what makes credit unions like MECU different, and better, than banks.

I've spent my career working in credit unions because I believe in both the value of our services and in our ability to help make people's lives better. We do that by providing useful products and services at a competitive price, helping members to succeed

financially, and simplifying their lives. Equally important, we also serve as advocates and problem-solvers, and help members learn to manage their money more effectively.

While I'm pleased with the results MECU has shown and the progress we've made, rest assured that neither I nor anyone else at MECU will be content to rest on our laurels during the coming year.

Will MECU be able to pay a special patronage dividend again in the future? That depends on our future results, and as a member, you have an important role to play in that success.

You can influence whether we pay a special patronage dividend in the future by actively using credit union services throughout the year, including automated services that help us to hold down our costs, and by encouraging others to join and use MECU. What I will do is pledge that we'll continue to do everything we can to help you and your family, so that in the end, we all can succeed together.

John C. Fiore,
President/CEO

Plugged In

Over 6,500 Locations To Serve You

No matter where you are or where you will be, MECU is as close to you as your nearest CU Service Centers.[®] With more than 6,500 locations worldwide, the CU Service Centers network is a cooperative of credit unions. Those credit unions have joined together to let you perform financial transactions and obtain services at any of the branch locations in the network.



With so many convenient locations, you can access your MECU account near your home, your work, or while traveling.



To access your MECU account at a CU Service Center, you will need the following:

- Your MECU account number
- A current U.S. government issued photo ID with a signature (driver license, state ID, U.S. passport, etc.)

Visit www.mecunet.org and click on Locations/ATM for the nearest CU Service Centers location.

MECU's Making Your Life Simpler

As a member of MECU, you can now customize your debit card PIN without having to visit the credit union. Simply call 866-633-5293 from the phone number we have on your cardholder file, supply your system-generated PIN, and then change that to a PIN of your choosing. It's that easy. No more having to remember a system-generated PIN. And no more having to visit a branch to create a customized PIN. It's just another way MECU is making your life easier.

Please note that if you're a new cardholder, you will be able to customize your PIN only after first receiving a system-generated PIN. Your system-generated PIN will be mailed to you a few days after you receive your debit card, which will also be sent by mail.



The Holidays Are Over, Now What?

Now that all of the presents have been opened and your kids are happy, it's time to review what you've spent over the holiday season. The bills may look overwhelming, but MECU has a solution to help you consolidate your debt.

Open a Visa[®] Platinum credit card from MECU and take advantage of a 5.9% APR[†] introductory rate on new purchases, cash advances or balance transfers for the first six months. The MECU Visa Platinum credit card helps you eliminate debt sooner and save you money in the long run.



Just a few of the many benefits an MECU Visa Platinum credit card offers:

- No annual fee
- Rewards option to earn points on every dollar you spend
- Travel accident insurance
- Auto rental insurance

If you already have a credit union Visa Platinum credit card, consider transferring your other credit card balances to your MECU Visa Platinum and take advantage of our regular low rates.

For more information on applying for a Visa Platinum credit card or any other products or services MECU offers, please visit www.mecunet.org.



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HOLIDAY HOURS:

All MECU offices will be closed on the following day in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day:

- Monday, January 17, 2011

Although the credit union offices will be closed, you can still access your account online at www.mecunet.org, through ATMs nationwide or through MECU's automated telephone banking service at 847-576-2100, or toll-free at 800-537-8245. To serve you better, we will be open earlier on Wednesday, January 19.

MECU is an Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer. MECU is chartered under the laws of Illinois and governed by a Board of Directors directly elected by its members. Motorola, Inc. is independent from and not responsible for obligations of MECU.

Your savings are federally insured to at least \$250,000 and backed by the full faith and credit of the National Credit Union Administration, a U.S. Government Agency. An additional \$250,000 of coverage is provided by Excess Share Insurance (ESI), a subsidiary of American Share Insurance (ASI), the nation's largest private deposit insurer.

[†]APR=Annual Percentage Rate. 5.9% APR applies to new purchases, cash advances and balance transfers from other financial institutions for new MECU Visa cardholders. Existing MECU Visa cardholders upgrading to another MECU Visa card are not eligible for the introductory 5.9% APR. The rate is contingent upon creditworthiness.

